



Testimony in Support of
SB 462, AAC Civil Restraining and Protective Orders

Judiciary Committee
March 17, 2014

Good morning Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the committee. My name is Adam Grabowski and I work with Prudence Crandall Center, Inc. Established in 1973, Prudence Crandall Center is the oldest domestic violence program in CT and the second oldest nationwide. Today, we are one of only a few agencies in the nation offering the continuum of shelter, housing and support services needed to meet the complex needs of victims, helping them move forward to safe, self-sufficient lives, free of violence.

I am here to **urge your support of Senate Bill 462**, which will provide critical financial protections for victims of domestic violence through civil restraining orders.

In 2013 I worked with a female victim who lost everything when she filed a restraining order against her former abuser. They resided in Massachusetts and had two small children. After the birth of their second child she started to have concerns. The victim reported he began staying out very late at night drinking with his friends and she suspected his drug use.

During the next few months she and her abuser had numerous arguments about his behaviors. He would drink excessively and physically abused her if the cooking or cleaning was not done to his liking. There were times this occurred in front of their children. He would force himself on her even though she would tell him no. The victim attempted to find employment to provide for their children and save her own money but he did not allow her to leave the home. He only provided her minimal amounts of money to care for the children and pick up groceries when he allowed it. The abuser also did not allow her to have friends and minimal contact with her own family. The abuser also kept important documents such as birth certificates, insurance cards, and social security cards with him. The victim stayed with him hoping that one day he would change.

There was a time she contemplated leaving and informed her abuser she was. He became so angry he hit her numerous times causing marks and bruises. He told her if she leaves with the children he will contact Massachusetts Child Protection and the police, saying "she kidnapped the children". She received no medical attention and hid the bruising from family. The victim continued to stay with him and the abuse continued. Eventually, she contacted family about the long term abuse. One day when abuser was out with his friends, her family went to Massachusetts and helped her pack and leave with the children to live in Connecticut.

I spoke with the victim and her family several times in Connecticut and she retold the stories of abuse. She was so frustrated with the system. The victim contacted the Connecticut and Massachusetts police about the long term abuse. She was informed there is nothing they can do as he resides in another state now and she was safe and due to the children's ages they were not impacted. The victim's mother was able to encourage her to file for a restraining order despite the victim's fears of what the abuser may do when he was served. When the abuser was served the paperwork the victim's fears came true.

The abuser sent her numerous threatening e-mails, texts, and letters. Some stating he was going to come and kill her or find someone to do it for him. He also terminated her and their children's insurance so the

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